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Class-action lawsuit nets Town \$789,183 (/articles/2023/05/12908)

May 24, 2023 by Staff reports

Farragut has received a windfall of more than three quarters of a million dollars from a class action lawsuit settlement relating to polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) contamination of the Fort Loudoun reservoir.

Town Mayor Ron Williams said the settlement check in the amount of \$789,183 was recently received by Town staff.

He said the settlement from the suit, filed by the City of Long Beach (California), et al. v. Monsanto Company, et al, “arose from PCB’s that Monsanto had polluted the water (with)in its manufacturing plants all across the country.”

Monsanto was accused in the lawsuit of PCB contamination going back decades. The settlement reached in the class action suit totaled more than \$500 million, which is being distributed to municipalities participating in the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program, where creek and/or lake sediment has been contaminated, according to a Knox County press release.

“Since we are located in the appropriate watershed (TVA) and have our MS4 permit as a stormwater program, we were eligible for this settlement,” Williams added. “Our understanding at this time is that this money is not designated for a specific purpose, so we are placing it in our General Fund reserves to be used as (BOMA) deems appropriate.

“Quite a few of the mayors that I have talked with that also received the funds plan to use it on stormwater just to be safe, in case they come back and say it has to be used for water quality.”

Knox County received more than \$2 million from the same settlement.

A Knox County government press release stated, “the money is meant to be used to protect local waterways and mitigate the impact of PCBs, while also monitoring for other contamination. Knox County leaders said they set up a Stormwater Fund for the money to be used on education, monitoring and the implementation of projects to protect local waterways.”

“We are excited about the opportunities this money gives us to protect our waterways and our citizens,” said Jim Snowden, senior director for Knox County Engineering and Public Works/ “We were contaminated through no fault

of our own, but are determined to fix the problem.”

According to the EPA.gov website, PCBs are a group of man-made organic chemicals consisting of carbon, hydrogen and chlorine atoms that have no known taste or smell and range in consistency from an oil to a waxy solid. PCBs were domestically manufactured from 1929 until manufacturing was banned in 1979, and have a range of toxicity and vary in consistency from thin, light-colored liquids to yellow or black waxy solids.

Due to their non-flammability, chemical stability, high boiling point and electrical insulating properties, PCBs were used in hundreds of industrial and commercial applications.

PCBs have been demonstrated to cause a variety of adverse health effects, according to epa.gov. They have been shown to cause cancer in animals as well as a number of serious non-cancer health effects in animals, including effects on the immune system, reproductive system, nervous system, endocrine system and other health effects.



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